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NSA pers
 Mr. LaRue H. Velott
 Chief, Foreign Nationals Division, PER/ER
 Rm. W119 SA-1
 Department of State

Dear Mr. Velott:

As you know, FBIS has been striving to bring our Foreign Service National (FSN) grades into compatibility with the new Interagency FSN Position Classification System being developed in your office. Since late 1979 we have devoted considerable funds and contractor and staff manpower to this task. Despite this concentrated and costly effort, we have not yet been able to reach agreement with PER/ER/FN Classification Branch on position standards for any single one of our FSN employee categories, and I am forced to conclude that full participation by FBIS in the System, if it is to come at all, is still a number of years away.

Several of our field bureaus already have been classified without the classifiers having the benefit of agreed upon standards with which to work. The results have been unsatisfactory in most instances, and lingering problems of undergrading and employee dissatisfaction persist at almost every post which has been so classified.

With one exception, the bureaus classified to date have been newer ones with few employees of much seniority in supervisory positions. At Bangkok, the one older bureau which has been classified, employee dissatisfaction reached such a peak of intensity that we were faced with near revolt. The situation was only eased by instituting Saved Grade for a period of two years or until the problems created by the classification actions can be sorted out. The adverse morale impact, however, and damage done to FBIS' good reputation as an employer, may prove irreparable. Moreover, I am persuaded that a classification system that results, as in Bangkok, in a 100 percent downgrading on the FBIS FSN staff, and would place some employees in the position of being in Saved Rate status from 8 to 14 years, will clearly not accommodate FBIS' unique personnel skill and operational requirements.

Two of our oldest bureaus, the ones in London and Nicosia, are scheduled for classification this September. We are informed that once again, as in Bangkok, the classifiers will be unable to work with agreed upon standards in hand, although the draft Media Analyst standards are to be "tested" at that time. In light of this, and with the Bangkok experience in mind, we naturally are apprehensive about the results of classification of our London and Nicosia bureaus.

I therefore would prefer to postpone participation by FBIS in classification of London and Nicosia until the Interagency Classification System is fully operational and ready to deal with FBIS, all position standards have been agreed upon, and the classifiers have the opportunity to work with full understanding of our positions and requirements.

Your cooperation in this matter would be most appreciated. We understand the difficulty of the task levied on your office. But our experience thus far has raised serious concerns regarding potentially major damage to the effectiveness of FBIS overseas operations unless we proceed carefully with implementation of any new classification system.

Sincerely,



Director

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FBIS/Ops/



(31Jul81)

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